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A SUCCESSFUL SWINDLE.

MINE is a case that should appear in the police reports rather than in the pages of this publication. My money has been obtained from me under false pretences ; my feelings have been most cruelly lacerated, and assault and battery committed on my heart. Is there, in this free and enlightened country, no redress for wrongs like these? I ask this repeatedly, and am as repeatedly assured there is none. All I can do, therefore, is to write a clear statement of the circumstances under which I suffer, in the hope that my fate may prove a warning to other young bachelors, and lead them to beware of bazaars and of young ladies behind a counter.

I am a young man of good family, with a handsome allowance, and first-rate expectations. I suppose I should be called catch by match-making mammas and their daughters. I am a captain in a crack regiment, my height is six feet, and my whiskers are unexceptionable. Altogether, till misfortune overtook me, I was as pleasant, good-looking a young fellow as ever flirted through a waltz, or made love at a picnic.

One morning last July, while lounging in my quarters at Dover, and doing nothing in particular, I received the following pink note :

DEAR CAPTAIN BRANTHWAYTE—We have all been very busy here getting up a fancy-fair in aid of the endowment fund of a new church at Clay-cum-Stickle. The Rev. Augustus Needall has kindly consented to undertake the responsible duties of the incumbent, but his principles will not allow him to enter on his new and arduous sphere until the endowment fund is completed. The dear man says so wisely and feelingly : "How can I administer to the wants of a numerous and starving flock, when so many of the bare necessities of life are wanting to myself?" So we want about £2000 more to make up a nice little income, and build him a commodious parsonage, and then we shall do charmingly. His excellent wife is aiding us, heart and soul ; and you, I am sure, will likewise contribute your mite, and bring over some of your brother-officers to do the same. The day is fixed for next Thursday. Bring your friends to lunch at my house, and do not fail me.—Yours, sincerely,

CECILIA PRYOR.

PLUCKWELL, Saturday.

P.S.—There will be a ball in the evening at the

Assembly Rooms, for the same object. Tickets, £1, 1s. How many will you have?

Now, I knew Mrs Pryor for a busy, meddlesome person, but I also knew that pretty girls were generally to be met at her house ; besides, old Pryor had a bin of still champagne in his cellar that was by no means to be despised. So I wrote off forthwith, promising to bring over half-a-dozen friends, for whom tickets might be secured. Thursday being fine, we set off in high spirits, and reached Pluckwell in time for a good lunch at Mrs Pryor's, after which we started for the scene of action.

We soon reached the large field in which the tents were pitched—entrance 2*s*. 6*d*, which we paid cheerfully, it being the first demand. In the field, we found the usual wheel of fortune, gipsy's tent, refreshment-stall, and one large marquee with gaily dressed counters, and still more gaily dressed girls behind them. Crowds of people moved about the field, looking as miserable as English folks always do on festive occasions. Suddenly one of my companions exclaimed : 'Hollo! Branthwayte, look at that little creature there standing on the chair.' I looked round, of course, little thinking what would be the consequence, and my gaze was spell-bound by the sweetest little fairy eyes ever looked upon. There she stood on a chair, before a little looking-glass, trying on a pink hood, which she was endeavouring to persuade some idiot to buy.

Never before had I seen such charming unconsciousness, such naïveté, such grace ! I don't know what she had on ; it was something white, and cloudy, and angelic. But much clothing seemed superfluous in her case, for clouds of golden curls fell showering to her tiny waist, and were brushed back from the sweetest, gentlest, and withal most piquant face in the world. (I am aware that I am using a great many adjectives, but really the occasion demands them.)

My first feeling on seeing her was, that I had never truly loved till then ; my second, an almost irresistible inclination to knock down that drivelling maniac, who was actually hesitating about buying the hood ! He said it would be of *no use* to him. *Fool!*

In a moment I was beside the chair, and speechless with emotion, I tendered a sovereign for the precious article.

'Ah ! that's capital,' she said, with the sweetest look of gratitude. 'Why, Mr Screwker has been

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doubting whether he would give me fifteen shillings for it. I hope you don't want any change?"

"Change!" I gasped; "never."

"Then come to our stall," she said, jumping daintily down from her elevated post, "and I will find some of my very own work for you."

I, of course, followed her to a large stall, where three other charming girls and a handsome mamma presided; and of course I gave a fabulous price for a cigar-case, which she said she had worked. (I don't believe she had, for it was hideous.) Of course, too, I had to buy something quite useless of all the three sisters, and to put into all the raffles, winning at last a large wax-doll, several sizes bigger than a child of six months. As this last acquisition embarrassed me a good deal, I gave it back to her, and afterwards saw her sell it over again for a considerable sum to a good-natured old gentleman.

"You make a capital shopwoman," I said.

"Ah, yes, I have some tolerable dodges. I did a good business before you came in faded sixpenny bouquets, which I sold for five shillings. They were so worthless that a good many people gave them back to me, and I sold them over again. I sold one nine times, and made forty-five shillings by it!" and she gave a merry little laugh "at the folly of some people," with a sly glance at me. I ventured on a tender reproach: "And nothing whispered to you to keep a bouquet for me?" "No, indeed; but I can get you a rosebud, a beauty, if you like;" and off she danced, waving me back, when I would have followed; and beckoning to an elderly grave-looking parson, who stood by the stall, and who was to all appearance the father of the charming quartet.

She soon came running back breathless, her hands full of lovely rosebuds. On the way she attacked that stingy Mr Screwker who would not buy the hood, and whom she now tried to tempt with a half-opened Gloire de Dijon.

"How much do you want for it?" said he.

"Whatever you please," was the demure reply.

He pulled out a handful of silver, and was, I suspect, looking for sixpence, when in a moment she pounced on the whole handful, with an "Oh! thank you; you are *too generous*," and swept it into her pocket. The fellow's dismay was delicious to behold; but he could only submit, for she was off again directly, and distributing her floral favours right and left, till, when she reached me, there was only one left.

"Now, what will you give me for this?"

"Anything, everything, all the money I have left," I cried, thrusting my hands into my pockets. But alas! they were empty; nor could all my searching bring to light more than one miserable fourpenny-piece. Imagine my dismay.

"My dear girl," I stammered, "you see this is all I have left."

"Oh, you surely can't intend to be so mean? when I ran all the way up the garden to fetch them, and pricked my finger, and made it bleed;" and she held out a little white punctured forefinger, to verify her words. "You have your watch," she added, "and you can redeem it to-morrow." I own I felt rather staggered at this. My watch was a valuable family relic, set with brilliants, and on the safety of which depended the favour of an aged and gouty uncle, of crabbed disposition and enormous wealth. But the blue eyes were fixed on me, and seemed to wonder at my delay. All prudent considerations vanished. I placed the watch in one outstretched hand, and received the rosebud from the other.

"Wear it to-night, and I will dance with you," she whispered, as our eyes met for a moment.

She turned away with a faint blush, and I left the field to dine and dress for the evening. Dine did I say? and dress? I suppose I performed those operations, but I have no recollection of anything of the sort. I could only dream of the past, and hope for

the future. If it had been for any one else in the world, I should have said that I was going to make a fool of myself. But any infatuation for her, so far superior to all existing creatures, could not but elevate and honour any man whom she might choose to accept. So I started for the ball at ten o'clock, fully determined to propose at once. She was late, but at last I saw her coming up the stairs, followed by her three sisters, with the mamma and the clergyman I had seen with them in the afternoon. I fancied her eyes rested on the rosebud in my button-hole, and that they beamed with a soft approbation. Cheered by this tacit encouragement, I seized hold of the first steward I met, and begged him to introduce me to "that young lady," pointing her out. I thought his face wore an amused smile as he complied with my request, but I took little heed of surrounding circumstances, so anxious was I to catch her name. The usual formula was pronounced: "Captain Branthwate—Miss Nevill." *Was* that the name? I could not be sure. I had no time to think about it, for the waltz began at once, and I seemed to be floating in a sea of bliss with an angel in my arms, keeping time to the music of the spheres. At last we landed on an out-of-the-way sofa, where I resolved to ask her to be mine for ever. I don't remember how I began; I must have been rather unintelligible at first, for she looked puzzled, and seemed trying not to smile. But when I managed to stammer out that I knew I was "quite unworthy of her, yet if the devotion of a lifetime," &c., she said quietly: "I think you must mistake me for one of my sisters." I assured her such a mistake was quite impossible. "Then you cannot have heard my name."

"O yes," I said—"Miss Nevill. I listened particularly for your name, and heard it quite well."

"My name is Mrs Needall; you must have seen my husband standing by my stall. The bazaar was for the endowment of our church, and to build us a vicarage. Of course I worked *con amore*, and took more money than any one; and I think you were my best customer," she added, with a triumphant toss of her little head that completely maddened me. I rushed from the room, took the next train back to Dover, and here I have been ever since, a most miserable man! I had not the heart to redeem my watch; so that, in addition to my other troubles, I may have incurred the lasting displeasure of my uncle, and lost the chance of some thousands a year. All this because I was fool enough to go and be swindled at a fancy-fair. (The worst is, that I still love her to distraction.)

OUR FIRE-BRIGADE AND ITS DEFICIENCIES.

THERE are now nearly three millions of us here in London, living, on an average, eight in a house. Domestic families may, if they can, guess at the number of rooms in which fires are usually lighted, especially in winter-time; and may thence, by a little arithmetic, arrive at a conclusion respecting the number of stoves and grates blazing away at once. Be this number what it may, it is certain that more than a thousand houses now catch fire annually in the metropolis, averaging about three a day; and sometimes the average is so far departed from that ten fires take place in a day. Whether the houses are insured or not, the fire-engines are expected; and if they don't come, blame is cast on the brigade. Yet, what is the brigade, and what obligations are the brigadiers under to attend at all? Moreover, what is the strength of the brigade, and does it grow as fast as London grows? These questions were suggested most seriously by the tremendous conflagration at Cotton's Wharf, in June 1861, involving the loss of a million and a half sterling; and they led to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee, by whom

information has been collected on these subjects, more full than was before obtainable.

The origin of the London Fire-Brigade establishment was simply as follows : Until the year 1832, each fire-insurance company had its own engines and staff of firemen ; and each set of firemen directed their chief energies to the suppression of fire in such buildings only as were insured in their particular company. Such of our readers as can carry back their recollection thirty years, may perhaps remember that painted metal plates were affixed to the fronts of many houses, denoting the offices in which the property was insured. To those plates the firemen looked in the first instance ; and in too many cases the men shewed indifference in aiding to put out fires in such houses as their directors were not interested in. Very frequently, too, the men fought for precedence, on account of a fee usually given ; and instances were known of conflagrations continuing to blaze while the men settled their disputes. The costliness and inadequacy of this plan induced the directors of many of the principal offices to club together, and maintain a fire-brigade in common. The late able and intrepid Mr James Braidwood, who had well managed the fire-engines of Edinburgh, was selected to organise the new brigade ; and the selection proved a happy one. For nearly thirty years did he proceed in his career of usefulness, until he fell a sacrifice to the flames at the tremendous fire in the summer of 1861 ; since which time the brigade has been managed by Captain Shaw, who had been superintendent of the engine-establishment at Belfast. The companies or offices one by one came into the partnership, until the number became, as at present, twenty-eight—some in the country, but nearly all in London. The expenses are supported mainly by a payment made according to the amount of fire-insurance effected by each office. Thus, the famous Sun Office has one-fifth of all the fire-insurance business, and consequently pays one-fifth of the brigade expenses. The management is in the hands of a committee, consisting of delegates from all the offices. There is a code of instructions printed for the guidance of the men ; but much is left to their discretionary power. There are fourteen permanent stations in the metropolis, at which men, engines, and horses are always in readiness day and night ; besides three of minor character, and two floating-engines on the Thames. The fire-engines are about forty in number, the horses about fifty, and the men a hundred and thirty. The smaller stations have only one engine each, the larger two or more. The number of stations has very little varied during the thirty years ; but they have gradually been reinforced in men, horses, and engines. The expenses, in round numbers, amount to about £25,000 a year : averaging about twopence per cent on the value of the property insured.

The insurance offices, however, are getting tired of the brigade. It is avowedly insufficient for the wants of the metropolis ; and as they have voluntarily entered into the engagement, they are not bound by any principle of law or justice to extend it at their own cost. It is certainly an anomaly, like many other of our public and social arrangements. If the brigademen assist in saving houses or property which are not insured, the offices obtain neither thanks nor payment for the service ; and yet for the interests of common humanity and of general safety, the men are directed to attend to all alike, the insured and the uninsured. When it was known, early in the present year, that the House of Commons intended to investigate the whole subject, the committee of the brigade establishment set forth the views of the companies on the matter. The establishment has neither charter, deed of partnership, nor act of parliament. It attends to all fires, in every part of the metropolis, so far as the strength of the staff will permit, but without the shadow of obligation so to do. It may be said, in the

eye of the law, to have neither rights nor duties. In its first year, 1833, it sent its engines to 458 fires ; in its last, 1861, to 1183. The government have now, however, been officially informed—'That the Associated Companies feel the necessity of relinquishing at an early date the maintenance of the London Fire-Brigade,' and 'That the Associated Companies are prepared, through the Fire-Brigade Committee, to furnish the government with every information in their power respecting the existing Fire-Brigade, and to transfer the entire establishment, on liberal terms, to any authority, the constitution of which shall be approved by the government and the companies.'

But, although the chief, the brigade is not the only organisation for extinguishing fires. There are the parish engines ; there are the engines belonging to the several dock companies ; and there are certain engines belonging to private firms, available for attendance at all neighbouring fires. Besides these, all of which are to a certain extent public safeguards, many large establishments contain fire-engines (without horses) for the immediate protection of those establishments themselves.

Mr Hodges, whose 'cordial gin' has made his name so well known in London, is quite a hero in fire-engine matters. Near his distillery at Lambeth are tallow-factories, lucifer-factories, blacking-factories, and other places where disastrous fires are probable ; and their dangerous proximity has directed his thoughts strongly to the subject. He has formed a fire-brigade of his own, consisting of a lieutenant and six firemen, besides Mr Hodges himself—who seems to work as hard as any of them ; and he has two fire-engines, not only for the protection of his own premises, but to aid in the extinguishing of fires anywhere in the neighbourhood. If a fire breaks out, and he thinks he can reach the spot before the regular brigade engines, he does so ; if not, he leaves them to grapple with the difficulties, unless the call for aid is very urgent indeed. His engines are larger than any possessed by the London brigade ; and in the eleven years from 1851 to 1862, they have attended no less than four hundred and seventy fires—entirely a voluntary act on the part of this liberal man. He has a fire-bell at the distillery, and another at his private residence ; and if a fire breaks out in the neighbourhood at night, up he jumps, and in many cases starts off with his engines himself. Everything is kept in such perfect readiness, that the engines can be sent off in three minutes after the alarm-bell has been rung. He has an observatory, where a watchman is stationed all night, and if this watchman sees indications of fire within a mile or so, the fire-bell is rung, whereupon men, horses, and engines are soon ready.

The firm of Messrs Brown and Lenox, the chain and anchor makers of Mill Wall, have a fire-brigade of their own. They have one engine, double the size of any possessed by the London Brigade, and two of smaller size ; and there are a dozen men who act as volunteer firemen whenever their services are needed, by day or by night, in any part of the Isle of Dogs. The work is gallantly and liberally done by all concerned, though the principals do not engage in it personally, after the manner of the great distiller.

There are dock-brigades also, formed on account of the immense value of the ships and merchandise contained in the several docks. The St Katherine's Docks have watchmen and constables who are regularly trained to the working of fire-engines ; they have four land-engines, and one floating-engine ; they have constant-pressure mains laid round all the quays ; and they will soon have hydrants in every warehouse staircase, served by the steam-power that works the hydraulic cranes. The London Docks have two floating-engines, four land-engines, and about fifty fire-taps in various parts of the docks ; and sixty of the dock labourers are trained to work as a fire-brigade. If a fire breaks out in the neighbourhood,

the land-engines may possibly render assistance; but the brigade is maintained specially for the use of the docks. The East India and the West India Docks, both of which now belong to one company, have a very extensive fire-brigade establishment, on account of the large area over which the docks extend. They have fifteen land-engines, two steam-tugs fitted up as floating-engines, and twelve hydraulic jets connected with the hydraulic-crane machinery; there are no brigadiers regularly organised, but the dock labourers generally attend to the engines. As a last example, the Victoria Docks—the youngest member of this great commercial series—have ten fire-engines and twenty-three stand-pipes, so arranged that they can be charged with water at high pressure in a few minutes. All these arrangements, it will be perceived, relate wholly or nearly so, to the safety of the property belonging or intrusted to the dock companies—amounting to many millions sterling; but they affect very little the safety of the metropolis generally.

As to the parish engines, we can really do little more than pass them by with contempt. The sobriquet 'half-pint engines' is an offspring of the public opinion concerning them. They were established under the provisions of an act of parliament passed in 1774, which merely required that each parish should procure and maintain fire-engines, but without any provision for the payment of persons to work them. The beadle and the 'muffin-caps' generally did the work, and were more laughed at than admired for their pains. The number of these petty, rickety, asthmatic machines is not exactly known; but the expense connected with them is about £5000 a year—a sum for which very little real service is rendered. Hackney is one of the parishes exempted from this censure; the fire-engines belonging to that parish are so well served, as to shew what can be done when the parish authorities apply their best attention to the matter. This exception, however, only makes the rule more glaring.

The case stands thus, then—Two or three tradesmen apply their own fire-engines towards the protection of their neighbours' property; four or five dock companies give a little protection to the houses near them; various parishes possess many engines which are of very little use; and the London Fire Brigade Establishment, supported by those who are not obliged to support any, works hard with insufficient means to quench fires over an area much too large for it.

The recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee may be summed up in a few words. The area over which the Metropolitan Board of Works rules extends to about six miles from Charing Cross in every direction; it includes 79 parishes outside the city, and 97 *inside*; and covers 170 square miles. There are the enormous number of 360,000 houses in this limit, for which the rated rental (always lower than the real rental) is £12,450,000 per annum. Mr Newmarch, a great authority on all these matters, estimates that the total value of all the insurable property within the above-named limits, buildings, furniture, and merchandise, and all, is not less than £900,000,000—a stupendous sum to be at the mercy of sparks of fire. Of this value, he believes that only one-third is insured. Now the committee recommend that the protection of this immense property from fire be transferred to the government, instead of being left to the unwilling but not unkind services of the insurance companies. They recommend 'That a fire-brigade be formed, under the superintendence of the commissioners of police, on a scheme to be approved by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to form part of the general establishment of the metropolitan police; and that the acts requiring parishes to maintain engines be repealed. That an account of the expenditure of the new Police Fire Brigade be annually laid before parliament, together

with the general police accounts; in such a manner that the special cost of the brigade may be ascertained, and that the area of the new Fire Brigade arrangements be confined within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Board of Works, with the option to other parishes to be included, if within the area of the metropolitan police.' The enlarged area here mentioned is no less than 700 square miles! a monster metropolis indeed. Under this arrangement, all the expenses would be defrayed by a small addition to the police rate—too insignificant to be felt by any one. The extension of the brigade, in engines and in men, would be made to correspond with the wants of the metropolis. Although not expressed in the resolutions, it was implied by the evidence that the present excellently managed fire-brigade establishment should be purchased on equitable terms from the companies; and that the experienced brigadiers, if willing, should be transferred from the one authority to the other. Matters must, in the end, come to some such definite arrangement as this; for, as they stand at present, it may be truly said to be 'nobody's business' to put out fires in the metropolis.

It is impossible here to pass over in silence the admirable services rendered by the Fire-escape Society, or (to give it its full name) the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire. Here the motive at work is still more voluntary than that of the offices in relation to the fire-brigade; for the object held in view is that of saving human life, without fee or reward of any kind. The Society was formed in 1836, but its present system was commenced in 1843. The staff of men employed is somewhat under a hundred, who have the management of fire-escapes, which have gradually increased in number from six to seventy-five. What these fire-escapes are, almost every one in London knows. They are long ladders mounted on wheels, with an apparatus of canvas troughs down which persons can descend from the windows of a burning house, and other appendages of ingenious construction. These seventy-five fire-escapes are placed at as many different stations in London—from Bow and Poplar in the east, to Paddington and Brompton in the west; from Holloway and Dalston in the north, to Camberwell and Peckham in the south—and pretty evenly distributed. The escapes are not usually brought out in the day, but are kept quite ready for instant action all night, with vigilant men to attend them. The city corporation and nearly all the parishes contribute towards the funds by subscription; and as the police and the firemen are always ready to work in harmony with the escape-men, a large amount of success attends the humane exertions of the Society. It stands upon record that the escape-men have brought down in safety seven hundred and fifty persons who would else have probably perished in the flames: and the secretary of the Society states that if the hurried cry, 'Run for the engine!' were more frequently accompanied, at the same moment, by the cry of 'Run for the Escape!' many more lives might be saved.

H E B R E W L E G E N D S.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART FIRST.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following legends are the result of a reading extending over years, but as they claim only a poetic value, it would be superfluous to quote all the works which have given rise to them. Suffice it to say, that the *spirit* of the old Hebrew tales is scrupulously maintained, whilst the *form* is often new. As they now appear, they are in many instances a recasting; in some, an old idea serves only as the basis to a new tale.

About forty years ago, some Hebrew legends, collected by Mr Horwitz, were published in English,

but the collection has but a few lines in common with the following.

I.

RABBI MEIR'S WIFE.

The renowned teacher and expounder of the law, Rabbi Meir, once sat a whole Sabbath in the synagogue instructing the people. In the meanwhile his two sons, both of unusual beauty, and deeply versed in the law, died in his house. His wife took them into her bedroom, laid them on her nuptial-bed, and covered them with a white cloth. Towards evening, Rabbi Meir, on returning home, asked her : 'Where are my sons, that I may give them the blessing ?'

'They have gone to God's house,' answered she.

'I looked round for them several times, but did not see them,' said the rabbi.

Meanwhile the wife had brought the light and the goblet with wine ; he blessed the light and the wine, and drank from the goblet. Then he asked again : 'Where are my sons, that they may drink from the consecrated cup ?'

'They cannot be far off,' answered his wife, and she brought up his supper.

When he had finished the meal and cheerfully said grace, his wife said : 'Rabbi, with your permission, I will put a question to you.'

'Do, my dear wife,' said he.

'Some time since, one of our neighbours gave me some jewels to take care of; now he claims them back—shall I give them up ?'

'How can you put such a question to me !' exclaimed the rabbi. 'Am I to teach you the commonest rule of probity ? Not only must you give the property back, but you must give it willingly and cheerfully.'

'I thought so too,' she said ; and opening the door to the bedroom she added : 'Rabbi, a friend had confided to us two jewels, and now he has demanded them back.' Then she took off the cloth that hid the two dead bodies.

'My sons ! my sons !' cried the rabbi ; he wept and wailed. She, turning her face away, cried bitterly too. But, then, taking the hand of her husband, she said : 'Rabbi, did you not tell me that property confided to us we must restore willingly, nay, cheerfully. Cheerfully, we cannot—and the owner will forgive us—but willingly, rabbi. Let us both say : Blessed be the name of the Lord ! blessed be He who giveth and taketh away !'

'Blessed be the name of the Lord !' repeated the rabbi ; 'blessed be He who giveth and taketh away ! But blessed be He also for having given thee to me, O merciful Lord ! without that gift of Thine to me, without this blessed woman, I should at this hour feel myself alone on earth, and doubting even Heaven. But she with one hand presses mine, and with the other opens the gate that leads into Thy realm, so that I behold Thee and my lost sons. May she be blessed for ever and anon ! And blessed and praised be Thou, my Father, my King, ruler of the universe ! Amen.' Rabbi Meir and his wife, when soon afterwards sailing from Africa to Spain, were taken prisoners by pirates, and the rabbi's wife, although not young, was still so handsome that she excited the illicit desires of the corsair chief.

She said to her husband : 'Rabbi, is a woman permitted to die by her own act to save her honour ?'

'It is,' replied the rabbi, and he hid his face.

Upon this she leaped into the sea.

II.

ALEXANDER AND THE SKULL.

Alexander the Great was a singular man. Instead of remaining at home, and taking care of his people, he set out to fight his neighbours, and when, by his great strength and skill, he had overcome one king, he

immediately sought for another to conquer. Some kings perceiving that resistance was of no avail, gave up their realms without a struggle ; but this did not please Alexander, and to the first king who now shewed fight, he gave double the land he had possessed before. In fact, Alexander was insatiable, not of land and dominion, but of something unknown : he felt a hunger and a thirst for which he could not account, but which he tried to satisfy by styling himself the son of Zeus, the chief heathen god, and then he marched on again, spurred by unquenched desire.

One day, having marched with his army through a desert, he reached a river. The waters of this river were so pure and limpid, that they excited general admiration, and in them swam fish of marvellous beauty. Some of the fish were red as gold from Ophir, others white as the snow on Lebanon, others blue as the sapphire, flaming as the opal, or green as the emerald. Although exhausted and hungry, Alexander long remained in silent rapture at this sight, but at length he ordered some of the fish to be caught and prepared for his supper.

The fish were unacquainted with deceit, and as soon as the line was thrown out, they all rushed headlong to the insidious hook ; but their very eagerness prevented them from reaching it, and it remained untouched in the midst of the throng. Suddenly they all retired, as if to keep council, and after a while the biggest and handsomest of the fish quietly approached the hook, bit, and was caught.

At first, Alexander, feeling very hungry, did not reflect much on this, but ordered the fish to be boiled ; on tasting it, however, he was so delighted with its exquisite flavour, that he ordered what was left to be reserved for his breakfast, and then began to ruminate upon the significance of what he had seen. Being unable to solve the riddle, he assembled his seven sages, and asked them : 'What is the name of this river ? Why are its waters so clear ? why are its fish so beautiful, so clever, or so stupid ? and why did their king offer himself to me for supper ?'

Quoth Thales, one of the sages : 'Great Alexander, in order to solve these problems, it is necessary that we should taste the fish.'

'Well,' said Alexander smiling, 'you are clever for a sage ; you may taste it, but let me then have a wise answer.'

The sages, after making a good supper, remained as ignorant as before, upon which Alexander, indignant, wrote a letter to his friend the great Aristotle, explaining to him what had occurred.

After some time, he received this answer : 'Great Alexander, the river flows from Paradise, and the conduct of the fish may be a token which you should not leave unheeded.'

Having perused the letter, Alexander rose and declared he had made up his mind to follow the course of the river, and see Paradise itself ; meanwhile, the army was to encamp, and await his return.

After a walk of seven days, he stood at the gates of Paradise, and saw Abraham within gazing earnestly on him. He told Abraham what had happened, and had brought him hither. Abraham did not answer ; he only handed him a skull.

'This is no answer to my questions,' exclaimed Alexander.

Abraham silently shrugged his shoulders, and withdrew from the gates.

'Well,' said Alexander angrily, 'I take the skull only to shew the nations that the most valueless spoil from my world-wide conquests came from what is called Paradise !'

On returning, the nearer he approached the camp of his army, the heavier became the skull ; and when he stood among his warriors, and would shew them his miserable trophy from Paradise, its weight had increased so much that he was unable to hold it longer in his hands. He ordered one of his strongest

officers to lift it; but the officer did not succeed in his efforts; nor did a legion; nor even the whole army.

Alexander again wrote to Aristotle, telling him these facts, and asking him for an explanation.

The answer ran thus: 'Great Alexander, a handful of earth upon the skull, and a child will be able to lift it.'

The experiment was made, and lo! it turned out as Aristotle had written.

'But how is this to be explained?' said Alexander musingly.

'Great Alexander,' said the reader of the letter, 'Aristotle has added these words: *A handful of earth on the greatest skull, and it becomes but an ordinary skull.*'

III.

RABBI JOSCHUAH AND THE PRINCESS.

Rabbi Joschuah, son of Rabbi Chavanya, was one of those men whose mind is handsomer than their body. He was of so swarthy a complexion that people often called him the Blacksmith, and mothers used to intimidate their children by saying: 'If you are not good, I will call in the swarthy Rabbi Joschuah.' But at the same time he was beloved by all who knew him, and the Emperor Trajan held him in high esteem for his learning and honourable character.

One day, when at the palace, the daughter of the emperor ridiculed him for his ugliness. 'Rabbi,' she said, 'how is it possible that so much costly wisdom is kept in such an ugly vessel?' Joschuah answering her with a question, requested her to tell him in what kind of vessel her father's wine was kept. 'Oh,' replied she, 'in what else should it be kept but in earthen vessels.'

'Oh,' said he, 'so the most vulgar people do; the wine of the emperor ought to be kept in finer vessels.'

Believing that he had spoken in earnest, and that he had given her a good advice, she ordered a large quantity of wine to be poured into gold and silver vessels; but on tasting the wine shortly afterwards, she found it had turned sour.

'Joschuah,' said she, when again meeting the rabbi, 'it was clever advice, indeed, you gave me! The wine which was poured into gold and silver vessels is spoiled.'

'Then,' answered the rabbi, 'you have learned that it is best kept in unseemly vessels. Thus it is likewise with wisdom.'

'But,' exclaimed the princess, 'I am sure, men have been wise and handsome too.'

'Ay, but they would probably have been still wiser if less handsome,' said the rabbi; meaning, no doubt, that beauty generally is accompanied by vanity, and this, as is well known, leads not to wisdom.

IV.

A GREEK PHILOSOPHER AND A RABBI.

'Your God calls himself a jealous God, who will not suffer other gods beside him, and on all occasions He expresses his abhorrence of polytheism. How can it be that He threatens the worshippers of the "false gods" more, and appears to hate them more than the false gods themselves?' Thus spoke an Athenian philosopher to a Jewish rabbi.

The rabbi answered: 'A king had a disobedient son, who, among other tricks, gave his dogs his father's name and titles. Should the father, then, punish the son or the dogs?'

'Yes, this sounds well enough, but is only an evasive answer; for if your God destroyed, or were able to destroy, his rivals, the false gods, He would at once take away the root of polytheism.'

'Should He, because there are fools worshipping the

sun as god, destroy the sun? Or should He extinguish the fire, empty the sea, take away the air, and everything else in nature which they contrive to set up as a god? Should He, for the sake of the blind, repeal the law according to which the effects of light and colours are regulated? Our God is a God of freedom. If a man chooses to steal his neighbour's corn, our Lord does not make the corn unproductive, but permits it to grow when sown, according to general laws. But at the same time the thief is sown in the house of the thief, and it grows, and with its secret poison weakens the shafts upon which rests the roof of the thief.'

'Who sowed the theft in the thief's house?' asked the philosopher sarcastically.

The rabbi answered: 'The thief himself. Go and inquire. Behold the fate of those houses where mischief has been done.'

'That we call Nemesis, one of our goddesses.'

'And we call it justice, one of the qualities of our God.'

V.

Rabbi Joachanni told his pupils: When the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, the angels would sing a triumphal hymn. But the Lord said to them: 'What! creatures are destroyed, and you will sing?'

VI.

RABBI RASCHI.

Rabbi Jarchi, commonly called Rabbi Raschi, lived in the 11th and 12th centuries (1040—1105 A.D.), and was born at Troyes, in France. His name is still mentioned with reverence next to that of Maimonides. He wrote a commentary on some of the prophets, and likewise an explanation of the Talmud, a gigantic work, without which that obscure book would be almost unintelligible. He was, besides, a great mathematician, and a very religious man.

It is said of Rabbi Raschi, that, on reaching his sixtieth year, and feeling himself approach the pale of life, he was desirous of knowing who was to be his companion in Paradise. He, of course, did not entertain the least doubt that such a pious and learned man as he, who had never transgressed any ceremonial law, would be ushered into the Garden of Eden, and be seated on a golden chair at a golden table, with a wreath of pearls round his head, and would be allowed to feast eternally on the glory of God. But he wished to know who the pious man was that should be placed opposite to him at the same table, for the righteous sit two and two in Paradise. When he had fasted and prayed a long time, God deigned to reveal himself in a dream, and to tell him that his future companion was Abraham-ben-Gerson, called the Zadik, at Barcelona.

Having learned thus much, Rabbi Raschi became anxious to make acquaintance on earth with his future companion, and to this end undertook a journey to Barcelona. To his imagination, the form of his Paradise-friend presented itself with a thin pale face, sunken eyes, long beard, a bent figure, a man who had studied the law night and day, had fasted and prayed; for such a man only deserved the surname of Zadik, the Righteous.

Great was therefore the surprise of Rabbi Raschi when, on arriving at Barcelona, he could find no Abraham Zadik. Several persons, certainly, had been honoured with this surname, but among them was no Abraham-ben-Gerson. At length, on asking if there were not in the town a man called Abraham Gerson, he was answered: 'What! do you mean Don Abraham the Wealthy? How can a man like you condescend even to ask for such a heathen, who is never seen at synagogue the whole year round, nay, who eats meat prepared by Christians! We all wonder why he does not at once become baptised,

and his name would thus be struck out from the book of life! Surely, Rabbi Raschi, you can have no business with him.'

'A fine fellow is my future companion,' thought Rabbi Raschi, and he threw back a rapid glance on his own life, in order to discover any sin of omission or commission by which he might have incurred such a disgrace.

'Surely, you will not visit that man,' repeated the learned rabbi to whom Rabbi Raschi had addressed his questions.

'Why, I may perhaps bring him back to the right path.'

'Do not flatter yourself with that—on him all endeavours are lost. But do as you like.'

When standing before the residence of Don Abraham, Rabbi Raschi was highly astonished, for it was a real palace, splendid, replete with beauty and taste, so that it even moved the heart of the old rabbi, who could only find this fault with it, that it did not behove a son of Israel to live in such splendour, whilst so many of his brethren were doomed to be in poverty and filth. On entering the gate, he found himself in an open court, where servants in gilt livery were seen moving to and fro receiving visitors, who had come in splendid carriages. The rabbi wished to return, and he only addressed himself to a servant in the hope of being dismissed, and thus having an excuse before God; but the domestic received him with the greatest respect, and ushered him up a broad marble staircase into a richly ornamented anteroom, where he requested him to wait a few moments. When left alone, the rabbi said to himself: 'There must be some mistake. This man is a bad Jew, a man of no religion at all; he has obtained here on earth his golden chair and golden table—his Paradise; how can any such blessing be in store for him in the future? He is too rich to become converted into the right path of resignation and self-denial. But I will do my best; I am perhaps the instrument of God.'

The door opened, and Don Abraham, a tall, handsome man, of about thirty, made his appearance. With a friendly greeting, he bade the rabbi welcome, and added: 'Let me hope that my humble roof may be honoured during a long period by the presence of such an excellent, learned, and pious guest.'

'Pious!' exclaimed Rabbi Raschi; 'how do you dare to say pious—to talk of piety, you, a scion of the law! I announce to you I have come in the name of God our Lord!—'

'I am sure you have,' interrupted Don Abraham smiling, 'and therefore I repeat that you are most welcome; but as for your reproaches, you may as well reserve them, as I have once for all chosen my manner of life. Come, be friendly; let us become better acquainted; and, first of all, do favour me with your company to-morrow at the celebration of my nuptials!—'

'Ah, you are going to be married!—and perhaps to a heathen girl!'

'No, to a daughter of Israel, a lovely, amiable, kind-hearted girl. Come to-morrow and see her.'

'Is she rich?'

'No.'

'Well; if only she were led into a good Jewish house, it would be an agreeable sight in the eyes of God. Meanwhile, who knows?—it may be a *mitzvah*. I will come.'

The conversation was interrupted by a servant announcing a poor woman.

'Let her wait a moment,' said Don Abraham.

'A poor woman!' exclaimed the rabbi. 'Your marriage is to take place to-morrow, and you have not yet thought of the poor, but you allow them

to come to you to remind you of your duty! For shame!'

'My dear Rabbi Raschi,' said Don Abraham, 'you are too severe. That you may judge for yourself, I beg you will accompany me to the woman, and ask her any questions you please.'

They went into the room where she was waiting, and on being questioned by the rabbi, she answered: 'Alms have been given, as far as I know, to all the poor; but I do not come here for alms.'

Rabbi Raschi was pleased to hear that his future companion was at least charitable; he was therefore silent, while Don Abraham asked the woman: 'What is it you want? What can I do for you?'

'I want your advice,' said the woman.

'Speak, and be sure you shall have friendly advice.'

The woman said: 'I am a poor widow with four children, three of whom are quite young. My eldest son, a youth of eighteen, worked for us, and by his honesty and industry has made us a comfortable though modest home; but now he is ill, dangerously ill.'

'Then, my good woman, you must have a physician; I will send you my own doctor.'

'No, Don Abraham, a physician is of no avail; my son is ill through love, disappointed love. There is a young girl, poor and honest like himself, whom he had hoped to marry; but now the poor girl is forced by her parents to marry another, a rich man.'

'Woman, why do you tell this to me?' said Don Abraham.

'Because you are the man, Don Abraham; and now, having spoken, I leave you to God and your conscience.'

'What is your son's name?' asked Don Abraham faintly.

'Abraham-ben-Manuel.'

When they were left alone, Rabbi Raschi, seeing Don Abraham deadly pale, with large drops of sweat on his brow, said consolingly: 'After all, it is nothing. I have never in my life heard of a man dying for love.'

'Have you not?' said Don Abraham.

'No, indeed not. You may be quite sure that young fellow is not going to die. Young folks sometimes make a great noise about their love. After some time, he will find another woman quite as handsome!—'

'There is no other beneath the sun!' Don Abraham exclaimed passionately: 'there is but one sun in the heavens. Take it away, and all is dark—the air is chilly, the meadow has no verdure, the garden no flower! Take it away, and you take life away! Life without love is nothing! Oh, the woman was right!'

'Well, well, Don Abraham, I only wished to comfort you. It is the bounden duty of a guest to share the grief of his host. It may be disagreeable, nay, painful to her lover, but I honestly think and say that there is no danger of death. Such sorrows may be overcome; but, of course, something must be done for the family, something of consequence even.'

'You are right, Rabbi Raschi; I hope I shall have something arranged by to-morrow. Do not forget to come to mincha.'

Next day, the rabbi was punctual at the palace of Don Abraham, round which an immense crowd had gathered, whilst through the gate flowed a magnificent stream of guests, who eagerly brought their congratulations to the rich owner of the palace.

The *hruppah* or baldachin, under which the wedding-ceremony was to be performed, was erected in the court, the marble pavement of which was strewn with flowers. The prayer having been said, the bride, preceded by a band of music and by torches, was led into the court, when the notary read the marriage-

* A good action.

* The afternoon prayer with which the marriage-ceremony commences.

contract, upon which Don Abraham said: 'There is but one little thing to be corrected: the name of the bridegroom is not Abraham-ben-Gerson, but Abraham-ben-Manuel; I have only been the *schatchan*.' In all other respects, the stipulations are unaltered, and I leave Abraham-ben-Manuel to conduct my business, whilst I travel abroad. Hollo! let the musicians and the torch-bearers accompany Abraham-ben-Manuel and his relatives into the court.'

'Oh,' cried Rabbi Raschi, 'thou art worthy, indeed, to be my companion in Paradise!'

At first, the rabbi's exclamation was unheeded; but he afterwards related his dream to Don Abraham, who replied good-humouredly: 'I am glad to hear it; it is so pleasant to have a good neighbour; and, besides,' he added with quivering lips, 'I shall come single.'

Since then, eight hundred years have elapsed. We may all see, in a short time, if they are seated together.

'HELP A POOR MAN, SIR.'

THERE are social problems—moral thistles, so to speak—questions so beset with thorns, that we can scarcely handle them without pricking our fingers; and yet we must handle them. In one way or another, they call for a settlement. They are ugly flaws in our civilisation, and we cannot in honesty ignore them or pass them by. Mendicancy is one of these. In the midst of our stately streets, in the midst of our haunts of pleasure, the beggar appears, an unsightly blot upon the scene. His rage and squalor spoil the brilliant show. Beauty and splendour, and the pomp of royalty itself, gallant military displays, great triumphs of art and science, all meet with a silent reproach in the hollow, cowering wretch that looks abjectly on at such grand doings. The beggar's glistening eye seems to say: 'Ah, nineteenth century, nineteenth century, you are no better than the dead ages of your bygone ancestry! You can build, and fight, and feast; you can colonise the wilderness, belt the globe with iron rails, and put a girdle of electric wire around its zone, but you cannot feed and clothe me. Here am I, naked and hungry, just as your eighteenth predecessor left me.' And the nineteenth century really does not know what to answer to the suppliant; so it ostentatiously bids him, by the mouth of an official in blue, with a bracelet on his arm, and a brass-headed staff in his pocket, to 'move on'—whither, it does not deign to inform him; and feeling ashamed of its harshness, and not quite comfortable about the results of its bounty, it drops surreptitious half-pence into the outstretched hand, and scuttles away with an awkward sense of having cheated its own conscience.

Yes, Society is hopelessly puzzled as to her duties on this particular point. She has her Mentors on this head, as on most others, but they disagree shockingly, and poor bewildered Mrs Grundy knows not what to do. Society goes to church, and there hears, in the sublime words of poet, and prophet, and lawgiver, and apostle, ay, and from loftier authority still, the bidding, Give, give! Society leaves the sacred building with tingling ears and a softened heart. She drops a liberal contribution into the plate that Mr Churchwarden Trundie holds in the doorway; she 'remembers' the shivering Lascar who sweeps one crossing, and the decent widow in clean weeds and an obtrusive bonnet cap who holds the broom at a second. The man who carries, stitched upon his breast, a placard which entreats that passengers will 'pity the poor blind,' receives compassion in a practical form; even the Hindu with tracts, or the sly-eyed Chinaman, or the sailor who fought under Nelson at the Nile, but who was most unaccountably excluded from Greenwich Hospital, and bears his years very well considering,

comes in for a share of her bounty. But once at home, and at lunch, Society is subjected to other and sterner influences.

'Do you know, Sophonisba, what mischief you have done this day?' says Mr S. didactically. 'I say nothing of your contribution to the mission at Ootteronga, because I take it for granted that the missionaries and their families are decent folks, and the natives are sure to eat them, as usual, before another charity sermon comes round; but I speak of your reckless encouragement of idleness and vice, sowing small coin to reap a harvest of imposture; that woman to whom you would give a shilling!—

'It was all for the sake of the child, the poor child in her arms, Thomas, dear, with its poor little innocent face quite blue with the cold,' pleads Mrs S., thus arraigned. But Mr S. informs her that such children are hired in Seven Dials and on Safron Hill at fourpence a day, with a large allowance where a whole family is taken, and that the unnatural parents who are proprietors of the poor little shivers, barter the health and lives of their offspring for beef-steaks and gin.

'I remember that woman's face these seven years,' persists Mr S.—'a regular Moloch. She has expended dozens of hired infants in the damp and cold of the streets. You noticed what a cough the poor child had got already?'

'Do you mean to say, Mr S.'—cries his wife, with horror in her voice, and tears in her eyes, for all women have a tenderness, almost a reverence, for little children. Her husband nods gloomily, and stirs the fire. 'The wretches! I would hang them all,' cries Mrs Society, thoroughly indignant. And next day the well-meaning lady meets poor Will Delves, the sick hedger, out of work, with his thin wife and hungry boys, just arrived in London from weary tramp, in search of unattainable employment, and she discredits Will's wife's unvarnished tale, and won't give the family a penny.

So we oscillate from side to side, and are usually in extremes on one hand or the other. Indeed, there is a wide difference between the practice and principles, especially the latter, of the elder generation and the new one. My grandfather and grandmother—all honour to their white hair and simple hearts—have never ceased their benefactions to what they call, in old-fashioned parlance, 'the poor beggars.' To question the truth of a suppliant's story appears a kind of minor blasphemy to old Mr and Mrs Grundy. They believe and give; they shake their heads sorrowfully when they are told that mendicancy is now against the law. 'What are the poor rogues to do?' asks my grandsire. 'Work? Ah, but suppose they can't get work to do?' On the other hand, my cousin, Philip Grundy, of the Upper Temple, is a hardened political economist. He is always quoting that statement of Archbishop Whately, which shocks ladies so much, to the effect that his Grace has committed many sins, but never that particular sin of giving to a street-beggar. I once caught Philip giving sixpence to a wretched mass of rags and disease, and he coloured and frowned as if I had detected him in cheating at whist or picking pockets. He acts up to his principles, hands over beggars to the grip of a reluctant policeman, appears as evidence before magistrates, and is tremendously bullied by the prisoner's lawyer, and hissed by the women in court. 'I don't care,' Philip says, 'though I've been twice pilloried in *Punch*, and gibbeted repeatedly by the penny papers. It is the duty of a good citizen to discourage casual almsgiving, and I'll do my part.' So he does. He is an active member of the Mendicancy Society; he carries its tickets, always ready to transfer to any applicant for loose coppers, and he is looked on as an ogre wherever tramps congregate. He attends meetings, and makes energetic speeches which elicit faint applause. When he goes into parliament, he will

* He who demands the bride from her parents for another.

bring forward a stringent bill on his favourite subject. He has the hottest arguments possible with old Mr Grundy, our grandfather. Tears dim Mrs G.'s silver-rimmed spectacles as she listens to his heresies. He is constantly threatened with being 'scratched out' of the old gentleman's will for his hardness of heart. But the old man, when he cools down, cannot but respect Phil's honesty, single-mindedness, and good intentions. 'A moral leprosy, sir,' says Philip; 'we must have the courage to cure it. You needn't shake your head; you needn't quote texts for my confusion. Yes, sir, I know we shall have the poor always in the land, ever with us—scripture tells us that—the poor, mark the distinction, but not the *beggar*. Don't begin again about Dives and Lazarus. The Jews had no poor-law, no organised relief; Lazarus would have been taken care of, ay, and healed, in our own time. And what we want is to help, and tenderly care for, the ailing, the imbecile, and the worn-out, who have no friends able to cherish them, but not to foster imposition, and laziness, and lies, sir.'

I believe Philip has some utopia in his head, with which, I confess, I have some sympathy. He wishes to see some radical change in our poor-law, whereby every one who can and will work shall find employment readily provided by government agency, at wages somewhat under the market-rate, so as not to tempt away labour from private employers. There is to be work devised for all calibres of adult and adolescent strength, but children are to be left to the schoolmaster, and beggary in all its branches is to be driven from the market, and totally extirpated.

'No need of very severe laws, sir,' says Cousin Philip Grundy; 'mendicancy is penal already, and we only want public opinion and feeling to endorse the act of parliament. But we shall never manage until everybody has reason to know that a beggar must be a rogue; that he could get work, or, at any rate, warmth, shelter, food, and clothing in the next street, if he chose, and that to give a wilful mendicant the means of dissipation would be a folly and a wrong. It is not so now. I wince, sir, myself, when I refuse alms to the woman whining at my elbow. I feel an inward pang as I send that slouching, tattered fellow empty away. The whimpering of that impudent child, bred up from babyhood to utter a parrot cry for half-pence, will ring in my ears for hours. Poor little thing! it's not her fault that she was born of beggar parents, in a beggar's court in St Giles's. But I don't encourage her, for fear she should grow up to beg, and to rear a begging family of children to whine at the heels of unborn generations. Did you think it was a pleasure to me to give Mrs Anne Cadgers in charge of £990? I tell you I did it as reluctantly as ever I went in at school to take a dose of birch-rod. I shall appear to-morrow before the magistrate, and the lawyers and the cheap papers will worry me as of old.'

I have not the cruel courage of my cousin. My head pulls me one way, and my heart another. Yes, poor child, it would be a thousand times better were you in a reformatory; but I do not like to place you in the custody of £990 yonder. I daresay you are telling me a pack of falsehoods about your sick mother, and your numerous brothers and sisters, and the length of time since you tasted food, but your poor pinched face and chilblained hands tell no lie; you are cold, wet, wretched. Yours is a bad trade—but perhaps there is some truth among all these fibs—there's something for you; and off runs the child, and I see her skirmishing around some ladies in the distance, and I look over my shoulder, lest Cousin Philip should have observed my backsliding.

I believe that I am but a type of a great many Britons of my own sex and station. We have not the heart to answer an applicant with 'Go to the workhouse.' We have visions of a gloomy bastile, thin gruel, a stone-breaking yard,

and a system severe and niggardly. Besides, if we *did* say the harsh words, the beggar would be sure to reply that he or she had tried, and could not get admittance; and we know by the newspaper reports that Cerberus was a mild janitor compared with some dragons who guard Union doors. It is too true. The poor cannot always burst the grudging barrier between them and the food and shelter which Britannia, alone among European nations, provides for them. Some workhouses are pandemonia of discomfort, tyranny, and hunger; some are admirably managed, and contain none but well-fed and contented inmates. It is a lottery. It ought not to be one. We should all, I think, like to do what is kind, and just, and prudent in this matter. We have no Bishop Hattos now, who would exterminate the miserable as vermin; all wish well to the poor, and would lighten their burden, could the manner but be agreed upon. There is the rub. We are only at present beginning to consider the subject from a rational point of view. Our ancestors left us this Gordian-knot along with others. They were most illogical folks where the beggar was concerned. In general, they petted him, fostered him, and regarded him as an integral part of society. If he grew outrageously impudent, they whipped him, and set him in the stocks; if he swarmed too thickly over the land, and frightened the householders, the branding irons were put in the fire, and the smith was busy in making manacles, and the beadle in plaiting scourges.

The Church of Rome has been, we may almost say, the Frankenstein to whose care we owe this monster. There were beggars in Pagan days; there were beggars in old Judea; but it was in feudal Europe that mendicancy attained its utmost development. Bishop and abbot encouraged beggary by gift and sermon; princes annually washed, before the eyes of multitudes, the feet of twelve selected beggars. Poverty was proclaimed the apotheosis of humanity. The Franciscans—begging monks—carried their cord-girdles and gray frocks into every village in Europe.

The abbeys and convents supplied myriads with a dole of food. Up to the time of the French Revolution, the religious houses abroad were the support of hundreds of thousands. In England, down to the day on which every monastery surrendered to Henry VIII, vast numbers were fed at the gates. We know what happened then: how whole armies of the maimed, the sick, and the idiotic, mixed with more dangerous hosts of sturdy beggars and bedlamites, poured over the country; how they beset the roads, crowded the streets, and extorted charity from the frightened dwellers in lonely farms; how nation and government took the alarm, and with how stern a hand the burly Tudor king put down the nuisance. Yet, in spite of Henry's ever-ready gallows, that fatal tree on which he is said to have hanged seventy thousand thieves, out of a small population—in spite of scourge and hot iron, and the doom of slavery for every convicted mendicant, the institution survived.

Elizabeth was a thrifty princess; her House of Commons had its Puritan majority, not over-prone to sentimental indulgence, yet the misery that existed forced queen and parliament to enact the first of English poor-laws. This, in England, was the great charter of the needy, and is always quoted as such. Then, first of all, did a Christian legislature avow the great principle, that every human being has a right to claim relief in the evil hour from his richer brethren—not as a boon, but as a debt. The strand of events that was spun from this woof had dark threads in it, and did mischief as well as good, but on the whole the law has been a corner-stone to English liberties and prosperity.

It is worthy of note that no continental nation has

ever thus proclaimed the state the nursing-mother of the needy. The beggar—and his name was legion—has been fed at church doors and at abbey gates, has been begged for by friar and priest, but has never been the direct pensioner of the lay community. The church has done all that was done. Monarchs have given great alms, so have nobles and burghers, but at the church's bidding, and not from secular notions. Men gave as they went to mass, not as citizens or rulers, but in their private capacity as believers. It is so, even now. The *Sociétés de Bienfaisance* are mere clubs for administering voluntary relief; the state may lend a little timid aid to these and other bodies, but it always shrinks from full responsibility. Foreigners probably give away a greater proportion of small coin than we do. On the steps of most churches crouch the blind, the halt, and the distorted, rattling their tiny money-boxes, or counting their beads.

My friend, M. Anatole Prudhomme, or Mynheer Vanderplank, has none of those scruples which beset us heretics. He is a man of large faith, except in a bargain. He has no unpleasant qualms on the subject of cherishing impostors or encouraging laziness and deceit. He has a copper for every white-bearded mendicant, a copper for every female in rags, and he never asks impertinent questions. With him, a beggar is a *pauvre*. If he were not poor, M. Prudhomme says triumphantly, he would not beg. As for a trade in whining, as for sham infirmities, and an artistic drapery of tatters, good Anatole leaves such suspicions to hardheaded and hardhearted Protestants. So he sows his small-change broadcast, and never reckons whether his gifts sow dragons' teeth or not. When he dies, if he be a dweller in some far-off simple province, M. Prudhomme probably leaves it in his will that he is to be attended to his long home by forty poor persons. The procession is formed, and not the least remarkable of the mourners are the *pauvres*, the forty beggars, male and female, chanting shrill litanies, and bearing in their hands an equal number of flaring, guttering tapers, the remains of which, with tuppence in money, form the meed of their services. M. Prudhomme knows no more of our poor-law than he does of the jurisprudence of Japan. He has read in his newspaper that Englishmen are rank hypocrites, who make a great show of giving a guinea to some charity, merely to get a banquet and an advertisement in the journals. Indeed, the French are never weary of sneering at our charity dinners, speeches, toasts, and subscription lists. They cannot or will not see that John Bull is a dining animal, and that his purse-strings always are more easily loosened when his palate has been tickled. They really believe that people are daily starved to death in the streets of London, a gloomy city, which they delight to picture as the scene of unheard-of crimes and cynical stonyheartedness. And M. Prudhomme continues to distribute his *sous* with an easy conscience, as becomes one of the faithful.

After this brief bird's-eye view of beggars as they are abroad, let us come back to the beggars at home. Two lines of demarcation exist, with more or less precision, in all our minds, dividing the professional mendicant from him or her whom imperative distress forces to ask alms. If a family or individual be tramping on foot to some place where there is hope of work or friends—if a sick parent or child lie starving and pining on a wretched bed, fretting for broth and warmth, and lacking in all things, surely succour may be demanded and given without blame. A hundred cases may be imagined, in which there seems no resource but the outstretched hand and the pleading voice. Yes, one resource: that which suggested itself to Mr Scrooge—the workhouse. But the workhouse involves a disruption of family ties, involves the separation of husband and wife, of parent and child, of sick and well. The

Board of Guardians, too, cannot speed the poor wayfarer on his road without he be a 'casual' pauper, *en route* for his own parish. Many of the decent poor feel a deep-rooted horror of the Union, its capricious officials, its hard discipline, its shameful livery, and its breaking up of family bonds. No doubt that workhouses should not be too tempting abodes; they ought not to allure the able-bodied to use them as gratuitous boarding-houses, but they rather overdo the necessary repulsiveness. There are many who would sooner die in a ditch than live in a workhouse; and for those of a different nature, or of a spirit more broken, the gates do not always move on too well-oiled a hinge. Bumbledom snaps and roars at the applicants, even when backed by a magistrate's order and escorted by a policeman. 'Be off!' says Bumble; 'casual ward full. No room. Orders of the Board very particular. No admittance, I tell you. Go to your own parish.' And if the cowering guests are let in, for a crust and a rug in a dormitory, ten to one they are thrust out at day-dawn of the morrow. What is a poor wretch to do, on whom the porter of St Gruffangrim's Union shuts the door persistently? Break a lamp, and go to jail; steal; or beg. The third is the most common choice, it seems so natural in the midst of abundance, of cheerful fires, lighted windows, plentiful meals, and the sound of happy childish voices. Even Philip Grundy, my Quixotic cousin, would scarcely give in charge such petitioners as these. And the frail cripple, or the dark of vision, or the poor creature bowed and distorted from birth, and never yet fit to earn wages by toil—what are they to do? The workhouse! True, they have that resource, and also that of some special asylums, and in their case the need is so great and patent, that even St Gruffangrim will open his grudging gates to take them in. Yes, but a perpetual prison, with, perhaps, unfeeling attendants and a dull cheerless routine, these are hard destinies for any afflicted one. Even the blind man can enjoy the warmth and glow of the blessed sun, even the cripple can love fresh air, and the deformed have sometimes a passionate attachment to the beauty of nature, to the stir and bustle of the great world around them. So, failing better arrangements for their comfort, perhaps they live by begging, and it is hard to be very stern with them for so doing.

Pity that we cannot tell the white sheep from the black, that we cannot discriminate certainly between the rogue and the honest poor. There are multitudes who eke out some other trade by begging; there are many more who make begging their sole craft. It is not tyrannical in sentiment to object to this; it is not to my fancy, unchristian either. Birds that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing. Such is our condition. We must work, all but a few drones, each in our allotted station. Nature, like a kindly but imperious mother, drives us forth to our tasks. We must eat, we must be sheltered, clothed, warmed, amused, and much more. Our wants insure our labour with brain and muscles. Cold and hunger are stimulants necessary to force us to exertion; and out of our needs, our desires, our discontent, has grown up all the mighty fabric of Progress, a fairy palace statelier than Aladdin's, and with deeper foundations. Do we ever envy the Neapolitan lazzerone, basking away his life in the sunshine, that serves him as a substitute for lodging, washing, and decent attire? Do we think idleness the *summum bonum*? If so, we err. Work is good for us all, braces us morally, mentally, and in the flesh as well. Why is the beggar to be exempt from this wholesome rule? Why is he to eat of what others sow and reap? What is his claim to be a locust in the land, living on its industry? Theoretically, he makes no such claim; he owns that he ought to labour, but pleads two demurrs to the indictment of laziness: the first is, that he is impotent for work; the second is, that he can find no

work to do. To substantiate the first plea, needs elaborate stratagem. Pallor, limbs artfully bent, a spine craftily contorted, mock wounds, sham sores, bandages that hide nothing, pretended lameness; these were even more common in elder times than now. Luther has catalogued the false cripples of his age, the many hideous deceptions by which the hearts of simple Germans were moved. This art of 'making up' an object of pity was no new one, even then; it is almost as old as human sympathy, human credulity, human cunning. In England, such counterfeits were known as 'Abram men,' perhaps from the old phrase of 'shamming Abram,' which in its turn grew out of the beggar's frequent reference to Lazarus lying in Abram's bosom. But a clever doctor, at any rate, can unmask the frauds of such as these, though mendicants have been known artificially to produce real deformity and disease in their own persons, rather than work. Generally, medical science is competent to overrule this first demur, when false. Duke Humphrey taught the lame man the use of his limbs, by very simple means, as Shakespeare tells us in one of his most humorous scenes.

But the second plea is not so easily upset. 'A poor fellow out of work' is rather a puzzling customer to dispose of; so is the sturdy tramp who trudges vigorously by your side, far along the muddy road or grass-grown lane, and who tells you that he has not tasted victuals since Tuesday morning at seven o'clock. 'Why don't you work?' Perhaps the person applied to ventures on that pertinent query. 'You ought to be ashamed of begging—a great strong fellow like you.' How glib, how ready is the answer! Of course the applicant is eager for work, is fully imbued with a sense of the dignity of labour, only no well-to-do brother will give him leave to toil. He can get nothing to do, nothing. It's hard lines, indeed it is! Would you, you, kind sir or madam, or perhaps miss, have the great kindness to supply the stout man with work? Ah, if you only would. There's a poser for any person of sensibility or justice. The beggar has you on the hip. We are not, all of us, employers of unskilled labour. The man may be a sailor, mechanic, artisan, navvy, anything. *He* knows well enough, whether he honestly desires employment or not, that the odds are enormous against our accepting the challenge. Am I, in one case, to take this unknown suppliant home with me, and say to Sniggins my butler: 'Sniggins, here's a poor fellow in want of work; set him to clean the spoons, and let him render assistance in kitchen and pantry?' Must I, in another case, conduct him to my haberdashery establishment, and bid my overseer convert the stranger into a light porter or warehouse watchman, or a supernumerary shopman? Or, by a third hypothesis, shall I, being an elderly maiden lady with a taste for flowers, convey this volunteer to Fuchsia Lodge, dub him a gardener, and turn him loose among my dahlias and chrysanthemums? Impossible! ten to one, I don't want him; I haven't a vacancy for even a shoebblack, and I'm not a dockyard superintendent or head of a foundry or factory, and I prefer to have a character, even with a knife-boy. So I give him a trifling pecuniary compensation, and I go on my way, trusting that he will not spend it in gin or beer at the next public.

The difficulty is, that the plea may be true. Competition runs so high, that many a strong fellow, many a tolerably skilled craftsman, has to wander in search of work. All places seem filled up. He has to go far and fare worse before a gap appears. It is a game of 'Puss in the Corner,' no joking matter to the player. The tramp, the real incorrigible, lazy prowler of the roads, knows this as well as we do. He takes refuge in false colours and a borrowed character. Perhaps he never did, except in hop-picking or the like, a real day's work in his shifty life. He may be a sort of tinker, and patch a saucepan now and then, or a bird-

catcher, or a cobbler, a seller of Dorling's correct cards on race-days, or a vendor of brimstone matches that nobody wants. To beg, when he sees a well-dressed person, is as natural to him as it is to a poacher to bring down a pheasant. He is a vicious animal, abusive, even dangerous at times; ready to rob on occasion; to fire a rick, or pillage a tipsy farmer now and then; to pilfer unconsidered trifles often enough. I am afraid he drinks all the alcohol and beer he can get; that his morals and manners are on a par; and that he is a brutal master to that poor slatternly drudge, with the bruised face, and the baby and the bundle, who plods after him so patiently as he slouches on half a mile ahead. His is a peculiar caste of evil-eyed folks, which might be 'improved' off earth's face with great advantage; but when you have found him out, I fear you may often confound honest poor people with him, and be unjust and unkind to them because you rank them as members of the tramping clan. Will Delves, who never took a half-pennyworth of any man's goods, who never beat his wife, nor ever got drunk but at a harvest supper, suffers unaided, because Joe Cadgers stole your linen hanging out to dry. It is hard to know who seeks work in honest truth, and who makes it but a stalking-horse and screen. Hop-pickers, harvesters, reapers, mowers, these have a practice of 'begging their way' to the scene of their work, and back again. Hops, indeed, are mostly picked by a class of mendicants and the like, who hardly ever labour except during that brief saturnalia of well-paid employment among the flowering bines of Kent and Sussex. The Irish who visit us to mow and reap, often make it a point of honour to spend no part of their earnings, destined as they are to pay the rent of some small holding in Munster or Connaught. They depend for travelling expenses on a Celtic vocabulary of tongue, and talent for acting. Thus, they are able to carry back their savings, all but intact, quitted in the most reliable portion of their apparel.

The 'broken soldier' is a less common sight than in Goldsmith's time. When we see him now a days, he is usually a real ex-warrior, possibly a deserter, perhaps discharged from the service. Before the Crimean revival in matters military, he was generally a sham. We Britons had unlearned the trade of arms, and any pretender from foreign parts was a rare bird indeed. The Spanish Legionaries, the mercenary band who did such good service to Queen Isabella, swarmed over the land, singly, and reaped a harvest of small-change such as beggars have seldom realised. The whole island melted into pity at the sight of their bronzed faces, shabby uniforms, jaunty gait, and pewter medals. They sold their old coats to aspirants as crossing-sweepers (in a novel) sell their brooms and good-will.

Sailors, in England, have enjoyed a more lasting popularity than soldiers. Counterfeit mariners have always thriven fairly, especially at a distance from the sea. These may be divided into two classes—the 'poor old sailor, poor old Jack, your honour,' who calls himself a worn-out man-of-war's man, and the shipwrecked seaman. The former is the most ambitious line; the latter elicits most of the milk of human kindness. The man-of-war's-man is apt to trip himself up with dates; he may claim to have bled under Nelson, very likely, being obviously but half a century old, and he never knows where the Nile was, nor where St Vincent was fought, nor the fifty-six points of the compass. His 'get up' is in a theatrical taste: glazed hat, jacket and trousers of blue Guernsey cloth, changed for white ducks in summer, pumps, black neck-ribbon, anchor buttons, lanyard, roguish eye, corkscrew curls, and drooping square-cut collar—T. P. Cooke in reduced circumstances, and advanced age. He is very jocular and obsequious, 'shivers his timbers,' and swearing a good deal, but does not know the mizzen-topmast from the

cook's galley, and could not describe the commonest naval operation, to save his life. The shipwrecked mariner has a briefer tale to tell. He was saved, on a rock, by miracle, and lost his little all. Somehow, he never heard that sailors really wrecked are housed and helped by certain charitable institutions on the coast, and his inland auditors do not know it either.

Since begging became illegal, wonderful means of procuring charity have been resorted to. There are the women who torment all and sundry to buy a pincushion or bunch of violets, the men with matches, ballads, buttons, needles, and so forth, sometimes announced as of their own make. There are girls with combs or half-penny laces, children with lucifers, all evading the law. Besides the turbaned Hindu, selling tracts, the yellow Chinese, and other foreigners, we have very curious native practitioners in the art of magnetising fourpences without incurring legal penalties. There used to be an old man who swept a crossing in Oxford Street, whose head was always wrapped in flannel, and who was wont to place his hand to his ear, and lean it on the handle of his broom, evidently suffering the tortures of an acute earache. Summer, winter, all the revolving seasons found him at his post, like a devoted in India, still leaning on his broom. His earache was chronic. He never begged. I never saw anybody give him anything, but I suppose if that uncomfortable attitude had not been profitable, he would have given it up. There still exists an old woman who goes about London with a troop of dogs; she has done so for years. The dogs have been often changed in breed, size, and colour; their mistress is the same—a thin, wizened hag, in dingy garments, with a whip in her hand, of which, to do her justice, the well-fed brutes stand in little awe. This is the manner of procedure. Arrived at a crossing in a populous thoroughfare, the old woman stops, and utters mystic commands to her four-footed allies, waving her whip, and gesticulating like one possessed. A crowd naturally gathers—for anything will attract a congregation of Londoners—to witness the feats of the performing-dogs. The whip waves like the wand of a wicked fairy; the old woman shrieks and beckons like one of Macbeth's witches. The dogs, not being in the least up in their parts, yawn and saunter to and fro, a poodle going up the street, a spaniel down, a Newfoundland across, until the whole half-dozen of the canine actors are scattered. Thicker grows the crowd, more franticly gyrates the whip, the furies that chased Orestes could not mouth and gibber more fiercely than the proprietrix, and the dogs do nothing; and so, *da capo*. What Baker Street has beheld, Holborn shall presently see—the same whip, the same energetic female, the same performing-dogs, that perform nothing at all. I never saw anybody fete this old woman either, but she can hardly keep up the entertainment gratis. I pass over the limping-men who frequent parks, and always sigh heavily when a well-dressed person approaches; also the women whose stock in trade is a bad cough; and the people who ask you, if in Paddington, the distance to Mile End, and are so dreadfully depressed at discovering how great is the space between. These are small fish that slip through legal meshes. But the singers—their performances are noteworthy enough. When we see, stealthily advancing, a tall, red-nosed man, in paper cap and clean shirt-sleeves, with a woman in a faded gown, and five small children in snowy pinafors, we know pretty well what high quavering notes, what hymns sung through the nose, and what prose appeals to the chief warbler's 'kynd brethren' we shall have to undergo. Curiously enough, such family groups, savouring of the footlights and 'property' dresses, are more familiar to dingy neighbourhoods than to the squares of gentility. The poor give as frequently, more frequently even, than the rich. They, who

have so little to spare, who know by bitter experience how sharp is the tooth of Poverty, are yet the readiest dupes and most certain resource of the professional beggars.

BYRON AT NEWSTEAD ABBEY.

In a far-off time during the middle ages, when the old Forest of Sherwood still spread as wild and wide as it did before the coming of the Normans or even of Julius Caesar, when its thickets were still the home of the red deer, and seldom knew the foot of man, when the Norman castle had not long risen at Newark by the flowing Trent, or the noble minster of St Mary at Southwell, a little colony of black canons, who followed the rule of St Augustine, came to raise, amidst the wild solitudes of the forest, that holy and beautiful house which, under the name of Newstead Priory, flourished until the general dissolution of monasteries.

Newstead, however, owes its celebrity not to its ecclesiastical associations, nor to the high place it held in English history while it stood as a religious house, but to the splendour of a recent owner's name; for it was the inheritance, and, during part of his short life, the home of Byron—a modern episode, indeed, in the history of a house which had Henry II. for its founder. Newstead, from a very early time, owned almost a principality, and was often the abode of the royal hunters who came to enjoy the chase in Sherwood; and their regard for the good ale and larder of the monks seems to have extended to the pious recluses themselves. But although Newstead was architecturally remarkable for the beauty of many of its features, especially the graceful western front of the church, that portion is now the only relic of the edifice—a fragment which is still the most striking and picturesque ornament of the priory buildings, and has perhaps no rival save in St Mary's Abbey at York. How transitory does Newstead, in its whole duration as a religious house, appear, when compared with the steadfast and enduring oaks amidst which it rose, and which were still vigorous when it fell! And still more transitory was its ownership by the ancestors of the poet, since whose succession to this property it has twice passed to strangers!

On the dissolution in 1540, the priory, and all its possessions in lands and tithes, were bestowed by the crown on Sir John Byron, lieutenant of Sherwood Forest, grand-nephew of the knightly 'Byron with the Long Beard' who fought beside Richmond at Bosworth. The anecdote relating to the sons of the first lay-owner of Newstead, which is given by Burke on the faith of its tradition in the Byron family, affords an example of the strange fatality supposed, even by the noble poet in his time, to attend the Byrons. Each of the sons married, and their wives are described as models of female excellence; but the elder son having married beneath his own rank, John, the younger son, became the object of his father's preference. The elder, when going out to hunt one day, fell from his horse in a fit, and died immediately. The younger son ultimately succeeded to the inheritance, but only to experience a life of sorrow. His beautiful and beloved wife lost her reason at the birth of her daughter—Margaret, who became the wife of Colonel Hutchinson the regicide—and within a few minutes of her death, Sir John, her husband—who is said to have become conscious of the event by some mysterious spiritual sympathy—also expired.

Although the newly acquired home of the Byrons suffered much from the brutality of the Roundheads, during the Great Rebellion, the domestic buildings of the monastery were not in ruin a century afterwards; for in 1760, when Horace Walpole, 'with great delight,' as he says, visited Newstead, he found it still 'the very abbey . . . the hall entire, the refectory entire, the cloister untouched. The park,

which is still charming, has not been (he adds) so much unprofaned: the present lord has lost large sums, and paid part in old oaks; five thousand pounds' worth of which have been cut near the house. . . . The refectory, now the great drawing-room, is full of Byrons; and the vaulted roof remains.' The room here referred to appears to have been the dormitory of the monks, their refectory having been used as a hay-loft until Colonel Wildman acquired the property, and converted it into the dining-hall. The fine roof of what was the dormitory is not vaulted, but is of oak, in which stucco ornaments, in a seventeenth-century style, have been inserted between the timbers. 'The Byrons' have vanished.

But the owner mentioned by Walpole as 'the present lord'—namely, William, fifth baron, who had succeeded in 1736, and was the grand-uncle and immediate predecessor of the noble poet—suffered the buildings as well as the estate to fall into deplorable decay. The refectory was, as already mentioned, full of hay, and there was hardly a chamber of which the roof did not admit the rain. He not only cut down the oaks—insomuch that the noble and spreading tree which stands alone before the entrance to the park from the Nottingham and Mansfield road, is almost a solitary relic—but sold all the deer of the park, which is said to have sheltered two thousand seven hundred head. It has been suggested that this was probably the topic on which his memorable duel with Mr Chaworth, in January 1765, arose. A club of Nottinghamshire gentlemen dined at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall, and a dispute arose whether Lord Byron, who took no care of his game, or Mr Chaworth, who was a strict preserver of it, had most game on his manor. Mr Chaworth having been mortally wounded, Lord Byron was tried by his peers, and found guilty of manslaughter; and he passed the latter years of his strange life in austere and almost savage seclusion, dreaded and unpopular, but surrounded by a colony of crickets, which, it is said, were seen on the day of his death to leave the house in such numbers that a person could not cross the hall without treading on them.

On the death of this old lord of Newstead without issue, George Noel Gordon Byron, then in Scotland, succeeded to the title and estates. This was in May 1798, when the 'young heir of fame' was in the eleventh year of his age; and it was in the following autumn, when his mother brought him from Aberdeen to take possession of Newstead, that he for the first time beheld, as he has said, 'its woods stretching out to receive him.' Its state of ruin might well have called forth the lament he penned at a later period:

Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds
whistle;

Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay.

His college-friend, Mr Charles Skinner Mathews, in describing (in 1809) his recent visit, gives some notion of the state in which Byron found the mansion: 'Newstead,' he says, 'though sadly fallen to decay, is still completely an abbey, and most part of it is still standing in the same state as when it was first built. There are two tiers of cloisters, with a variety of cells and rooms about them, which, though not inhabited, nor in an inhabitable state, might easily be made so; and many of the original rooms, amongst which is a fine stone hall, are still in use. Of the abbey-church, only one end remains; and the old kitchen, with a long range of apartments, is reduced to a heap of rubbish. Leading from the abbey to the modern part of the habitation is a noble room, seventy feet in length, and twenty-three in breadth; but every part of the house displays neglect and decay, save those which the present lord [the poet] has recently fitted up.'

Such of the buildings of the monastery as were still

standing in Byron's time, remained, probably, much in the state in which the monks had left them; and in the days of the poet they seem to have been still so little altered that the whole aspect of the priory spoke less

Of the baron than the monk.

The church, however, had been almost destroyed, and only the buildings that were suitable for residence had been at all preserved; but the domestic architecture of the monks was so far retained, and a monastic style has been so far adopted in the additions of modern times, that the feature of Newstead which to a stranger seems the most characteristic, is the transformation of a monastery into an inhabited and elegant mansion of the present day. The picturesque cloisters, with the vaulted chapter-house of transition architecture, now the domestic chapel; the low, arched dining-room, formerly the prior's chamber; and the fine crypt, now the servants' hall, are the most antique portions of the old buildings that have been incorporated with the house. The crypt is as entire as when it was the eleemosynary of the charitable monks.*

While the buildings of Newstead have been thus altered, Sherwood Forest itself has undergone great change. Washington Irving represents the house as standing in 'a legendary neighbourhood,' and amidst the forest-haunts which the exploits of Robin Hood have for ever associated with ballad poetry; but around the park, few portions of the forest remain uncleared, and 'the greenwood' is not what it was when inhabited by the red deer, and haunted by the outlaw. Yet patriarchal oaks stand like sentinels on the ancient domain of forest, and waving woods form a sylvan framework round the old historic walls, and seem to keep the spot with all its memories isolated from the turmoil of the world.

Of the situation of Newstead Abbey, the noble poet has himself drawn the best picture we can have in verse; it was composed in Italy, some years after he first saw Newstead, and when the ancestral seat was his own no more.

It stood embosomed in a happy valley,
Crowned by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus, in act to rally * * *

* * *
And from beneath the boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters: as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd
To quaff a brook which murmured like a bird.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep and freshly fed
By a river, which its softened way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wild fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downward to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fixed upon the flood.

Its outlet dashed into a deep cascade
Sparkling with foam. * * *

* The adjacent lake, known as 'the Eagle Pond,' shares the romance which surrounds everything at Newstead. When it was drained in the time of the noble poet's immediate predecessor, the workmen fished up a fine brass eagle, mounted, as a reading-desk, on a pedestal (and as Colonel Wildman always said, two candlesticks also), formerly, doubtless, used in the priory church, and thrown into the lake for concealment from Henry VIII.'s plundering 'visitors.' After remaining submerged for two centuries and a half, the eagle has found its way to the choir of the noble old collegiate church of Southwell. The hollow globe on which the figure of the bird stands was found to contain writings of the monastery. Two chests are said to have been seen when the lake was drained, but they were not raised, nor were they recovered (if they exist at all) when the water was again drained off after Colonel Wildman's purchase of Newstead.

And he thus describes the appearance of the buildings :

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screened many an aisle ;
These last had disappeared—a loss to art.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,

With more of the monastic than had been
Elsewhere preserved ; the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween.
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unpaired, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reformed, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

* * * * *

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers joined
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind.

It was not Lord Byron's fate to see the domestic buildings of the monastery restored and preserved, as they have since been, or to leave many visible traces of his ownership at Newstead ; but his genius has for ever surrounded the spot with poetic associations that will be more enduring than its walls. At Newstead, when

The boy was sprung to manhood,

Lord Byron lived ; here he wrote many of his lesser poems ; near Newstead is the 'gentle hill' on which, in his pathetic *Dream*, he

Saw two beings in the hues of youth
Standing ;

and it was while living at Newstead that he beheld the face

Which made
The starlight of his boyhood ;

for in the vicinity lived Mary Chaworth, the granddaughter of his predecessor's antagonist and victim. Even the grave of his favourite dog receives the honours of a place of pilgrimage, and 'Boatswain' is quite one of the 'dogs of history.' The character of his monument among the ornamental trees that decorate the grassy site of the priory church, and its unfitness for such a spot, do not diminish the touching force of the epitaph written by Byron at Newstead on the 30th November 1808, and engraved on the tablet in commemoration of his gentle and affectionate follower—

The poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend.

One memorial of his boyhood's home at Newstead is still green and flourishing, namely, the oak which he planted near the house soon after his arrival. His name, too, has been attached to a spring that rises near a group of yews which were probably old before his ancestors had a name in history.

Byron, after long absence, took up his residence at Newstead in September 1808, and there celebrated his coming of age (on the 22d of the following January) by such festivities as his narrow means and limited society could furnish. Beside 'the ritual roasting' of an ox, a ball was given in honour of the day. Nor were these the only revels of his 'hours of idleness' at Newstead that startled the owls and woke the long silent echoes of the cloister. In the same year (1809), when contemplating a long absence from England, he assembled round him a party of young college-friends for a sort of festive farewell, and in a letter (written many years afterwards), in speaking of his friendship for Mr Mathews, Byron himself describes their unhallowed doings :

'We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and monks' dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of some

seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking Burgundy, claret, champagne, and what not, out of the skull-cup* and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house in our conventional garments. Mathews always denominated me the abbot.'

After returning in July 1811 from his eastern tour, Byron wrote thus in a letter to Moore : 'The place is worth seeing as a ruin, and I can assure you there was some fun there even in my time, but that is past. The ghosts, however, and the gothics, and the waters, and the desolation, make it very lively still.'

He peopled the gloomy and romantic pile with shadowy as well as substantial inhabitants, and it seems to have been during his visit to Newstead in 1814 that he actually fancied he saw the ghost of the Black Friar, which was said to have haunted the priory from the time of the dissolution :

A monk arrayed
In cowl, and beads, and dusky garb, appeared,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard : *

He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
But slowly.

This is the apparition that seems to have been regarded as a kind of evil genius of the Byrons :

By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said
He fits on the bridal eve ;
And—'tis held as faith—to their bed of death
He comes—but not to grieve :

When an heir is born, he is heard to mourn ;
And when aught is to baffle
That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.

The life and the brief dominion of the noble poet himself seem hardly less shadowy. He had not long attained twenty-one, when, writing to his mother, he said : 'Newstead and I stand or fall together. I have now lived on the spot ; I have fixed my heart upon it, and no pressure, present or future, shall induce me to barter the last vestige of our inheritance. I have that pride within me which will enable me to support difficulties. I can endure privations ; but could I obtain, in exchange for Newstead Abbey, the first fortune in the country, I would reject the proposition.'

This was written in 1809. In three years afterwards, Newstead was nevertheless put up for sale ; but only £90,000 being offered, a private contract for its sale at £140,000 was afterwards made. The contract, however, was not completed, and in September 1814, Lord Byron wrote : 'I have got back Newstead ; but in 1815 (on the 2d January) his ill-fated marriage took place ; and on the 25th April 1816, at the age of twenty-eight, he left his native country for ever. In 1818, Newstead was purchased by Colonel Wildman ; and his noble schoolfellow expressed to him his satisfaction that the place which had cost him 'more than words to part with,' had fallen into the hands of one who was likely to raise the venerable building to something like its former splendour. The purchase-money in 1818 is understood to have been about £100,000, and the much larger amount for which it was sold last year (1861), marks the improvement which everything at Newstead underwent in the hands of the late owner, who not only planted largely, and increased the value of the estate generally, but evinced his good taste by care and improvement of the domestic buildings of

* The skull found in digging within the priory, which had been polished and mounted in silver for a drinking-cup, and is now among the few Byron relics preserved at Newstead. It is of a dark colour, mottled, and resembling tortoise-shell.

this romantic old pile. In little more than eight years from his finally leaving Newstead, the remains of Byron were brought from Greece to his last resting-place in the little village church of Hucknall, near Newstead, and deposited beside the remains of his mother. This was in July 1824.

The rooms that the poet inhabited, and the furniture he used, were, at the time of Colonel Wildman's death, preserved as Byron left them—plain and sombre, but more attractive to the visitor who goes in retrospective mood, than the new and luxurious halls of Newstead in their modern splendour. The panelled room, now or lately the breakfast-room, is a chamber of great interest, not only from its seventeenth-century character, but because it was used as the dining-room by Lord Byron. His bedroom, too, was carefully preserved, furnished as he left it. His lifelike portrait by Phillips adorns the drawing-room, and a few less important objects—personal relics, such as the little bronze candlesticks of his writing-table, and the collar of 'Boatswain,' his favourite dog, are still preserved upon the spot. The library is perhaps more in keeping with the historical shadows of Newstead Priory than any other room; and the books, which, after Colonel Wildman's death, were sold in bulk to the new owner of the estate, remain as they were in the colonel's time; but in the collection none that appear to have belonged to Byron are known. As far as regards pictures, Byron's description, in *Don Juan*, of the

Gallery of a sombre hue,

Long, furnished with old pictures of great worth
Of knights and dames,

where

The pale smile of beauties in the grave,
The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
Glimmer on high—

has ceased to be applicable to Newstead. Heavy tapestries, old cabinets, and quaint portraits, collected from various sources and countries by Colonel Wildman, and carved ceilings of seventeenth-century date, give a very antique aspect to most of the bedrooms in the abbey, the names given to some of which—as 'King Edward the Third's Room,' 'King Henry the Seventh's Lodgings,' 'King Charles the Second's Room,' 'Prince Rupert's Room,' &c.—are at least in keeping with the historical traditions of the spot, though it must not be supposed that the chambers themselves are of Gothic character, or their furniture of medieval date. The private apartments, as lately used by Colonel and Mrs Wildman, enriched as they are by historical portraits and recent works of art, are of a more cheerful character; and in the stately and noble drawing-room, and equally fine dining-hall, into which the old refectory and dormitory have been respectively converted, one forgets the former destination of their walls amidst objects that certainly speak *more* of the baron than the monk.

The western front of the church, already mentioned, is the only fragment of ecclesiastical architecture that has been combined with the picturesque façade of the mansion; but it is a fragment remarkable for the elegance of its character and for its architectural value as a graceful work of the period when the Early English passed into that Decorated style which began to prevail late in the reign of Edward I. The enclosure, once beneath the vaulted roof of the church, is now an open lawn and shrubbery; but in the highest niche of the gable or western front, 'alone and crowned,'

Spared by some chance, when all beside was spoiled,
the statue of the blessed Virgin and infant Saviour
holds its tutelary place,

And makes the earth below seem holy ground.

The pensive beauty of the scene is greatly enhanced

when the moonbeams throw their calm and softening lustre on the wrecks of human art, and fill with pale light the garden that lies beyond the shadow of the walls, where all is so tranquil round the forgotten graves; and when, as Byron himself has pictured the scene,

The rising moon begins to climb
The topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air.

The 'sun of Newstead' is not likely again to shine, nor can it be supposed that 'hours splendid as the past' will again be known there; but it is a place that must ever be irradiated by the pale lustre of historic memories, as a medieval shrine of worship, and a modern home of genius.

OLD NAMES OF OLD FLOWERS.

TRADITIONAL names are among the most interesting relics of bygone times. There are many that still cling to our language though their original meaning has been long since lost sight of, and failing to understand them, when we employ them, we do it not without certain misgivings as to their propriety. Some of them appear to us even silly, suitable only for the prattle of childhood, but it may be pretty safely assumed of a very old name that it is not a mere empty sound—*nos et preterea nihil*. The very fact of its having survived the vicissitudes of ages affords presumptive evidence of some inherent though latent virtue; and careful inquiry into the structure of words often brings to light the significance and appropriateness of names which previously appeared to be, at the best, unmeaning.

Many of the familiar names of wild and garden flowers would repay the trouble of a thorough sifting. We may instance the Herb Robert (*Geranium Robertianum*). This is in appearance a silly name. Various conjectures have been made as to its origin; the most current is, that it was given in honour of some unknown person of the name of Robert, who first discovered the plant; but a conspicuous flower displaying itself abundantly on hedge-banks, old walls, and by roadsides, almost everywhere, needs no discoverer. The name is probably a corruption from Robwort, the red plant, for this plant presents a remarkable appearance answering particularly to such a description. At an advanced stage of its growth, especially when found in a dry sunny situation, all the stems, the leaves, and their footstalks assume a deep rich red colour—a phenomenon not manifested to an equal degree by any other wild flower, excepting, perhaps, the kindred *Geranium lucidum*, which also is occasionally deeply tinged. The addition of 'herb' may be supposed to have been made when, in course of time, the original Robwort was forgotten, to put a difference between the plant and the man or boy Robert.

Borage (*Borago officinalis*) is a plant formerly held in repute for certain virtues it was supposed to possess. Dodoneus, Gerarde, and others assert its power to cheer the heart and inspire courage. Its specific name, *officinalis*, proves it to have been at one time so much in use that it was an article of commerce kept in the herb-shops. Undoubtedly, the preparation in which it was an innocent ingredient was a potent one, for good generous wine was ordered as the vehicle of its imaginary essence. No wonder, then, if the heart was made glad and the courage rose. But for these results the subject of them was in no degree indebted to the plant in question, which it may safely be said has no such properties as were once attributed to it. The superstition appears to have originated in the similarity that exists between the name borage and the verb *boire*, to drink, which may have led to the idea that borage was good for a *boirage* (breuvage), a

potation. But the true explanation of the name may be found in the old words *bor* or *mor*, black, and *eg* or *ago* (Italian), a sting, cusp, or sharp point; and in this flower may be seen a black projection of a conical form, much resembling the sting of some animal: it consists of an assemblage of anthers and certain valves, and standing out as it does in strong relief against the gay light blue petal, is a very remarkable feature. A momentary glance at the flower will serve to convince one of the propriety of calling it the flower with the black sting.

Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*).—This name is commonly explained as signifying Fair Lady, because of its use formerly as a cosmetic—the juice of the berry to give a tinge to the cheek, and the extract of the plant to produce an unnatural enlargement of the pupil of the eye. It cannot be denied that the plant has a very remarkable specific action on the visual nerves, and that, though highly dangerous, it is at this day much employed, especially by seamstresses, for temporarily strengthening the sight. But a simple and more probable explanation of the name may be given; namely, that it is formed of the old words *bell*, and *donna*, signifying brown, for the flower is tubular or bell-shaped, not unlike a campanula, but of a dusky purple or brownish colour. Belladonna, then, represents the brown bell, as distinguished from the commoner blue-bell.

Among the names of plants, there are some which appear to have reference to certain characters or incidents of sacred history. St James's Wort (*Senecio Jacobaea*) is a kind of groundsel or ragwort, called by the latter name because of the singularly ragged or incised character of the leaves. Now, it is well known that rag finds a synonym in jag, hence jagwort; this glides smoothly enough into jackwort, thence to Jacques wort, and Jacobaea and St James's wort.

St Peter's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).—This plant presents a singular appearance when held between the eye and a strong light: it seems to be dotted over with minute holes, hence the Latin name *perforatum*, full of holes; and the old English name in all probability was Pierced wort or Pierce wort, easily corrupted to Pierre's wort or St Peter's wort. It may be remarked that *Hypericum* also appears to have a barbarous origin; *y*=pricked, or the pricked or punctured plant.

Lady's Thistle, or *Our Lady's Thistle* (*Carduus Marianus*, and *Carduus Marie*).—All these names are apparently corruptions of milk-thistle, the old and suitable Saxon title of this plant, which is remarkable for numerous white streaks on its leaves, the cause of which is the presence of an opaque film which overlies the principal veins in all their windings. The old French name, *Chardon laiteux*, also points to this peculiarity; and this French name appears to have been the original cause of the corruption. The laiteuse-thistle, or lettuce-thistle (for lettuce has also the same meaning—*lactcea*, the milky plant), was translated into Lady's Thistle, then Our Lady's Thistle, and ultimately the error was confirmed by those scientific men who embodied it in the Latin name by which we now recognise the plant. A very ridiculous superstition was current formerly, which accounted for the white streaks on this plant by saying that the milk of the Virgin Mary was spilt upon it.

Danewort, or *Dwarf-elder* (*Sambucus ebulus*).—To account for this name, some old writers have averred that the plant sprang from the blood of the Danes who were slain in battle; others more modestly suggest that the Danes first introduced it into this country. It differs from our common elder-tree in the style of its growth, being strictly an herbaceous perennial, seldom attaining a greater height than six or seven feet. The old British language throws light upon this name, *Dan* in that language signifying inferior; and it appears reasonable to conclude that this is the Dan-elder, or Dwarf-elder.

TWO AUTUMN PICTURES.

I. EVENING.

The grass is dank with twilight dew;
The sky is throbbing thick with stars—
I see the never-parted Twins,
And, guarding them, the warrior Mars;
High, too, above the dark elm-trees,
Glitter the sister Pleiades.

No foot upon the quiet bridge—
No foot upon the quiet road;
No bird stirs in the covert walks;
Only the watchman is abroad.
From distant gate, the mastiff's bark
Comes sounding cheerly through the dark.

The hazel leaves, black velvet now,
Rise patterned 'gainst the twilight sky;
The restless swallow sleeps at last,
The owl unveils its luminous eye;
Our cottage like a light-house shines
From out its covering of vines.

I know above my lamp-lit room
The kindly angel-stars are watching,
O'er the long line of dark-ridged roof,
Far over gable-end and thatching;
And now I blow the light out—pray,
Dear wife, for him who's far away.

II. MORNING.

With Hope renewed, with fresher love,
With heart's return and brighter eyes,
Now Morning glitters in the grass.
With gladsome thought, I 'gin to rise.
The lawn is blooming dewy gray,
Flower-like expands the golden day.

The robin on the mountain ash
His morning-hymn sings sweet to me;
High on the topmost twig alone
He sings, calm, clear, and jocundly.
The yellow leaves around him fall;
From distant fields the black-birds call.

One rose, on this gray autumn day,
Blooms with a steadfast flame,
Like other flowers in slow decay,
Going to whence they came:
As swarms of golden butterflies,
The dead leaves fill October skies.

Through ceaseless golden rain of leaves,
The market-carts jog by,
While morning clouds, go, fraught with light,
In order through the sky.
The trees, with hushed and hated breath,
Are waiting silently for death.

The bees are on the ivy bloom,
Blythe as in April-time;
The gathering swallows on the roofs
Look toward another clime;
Teaching us all that, proud or meek,
We too another home must seek.

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